

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A mask assembly comprising:

a patient interface configured for connection to a patient in use, the patient interface being in communication with a source of gas pressurized above atmospheric pressure; and

a filter assembly configured to receive gas exhaled by the patient in use, whereby the exhaled gas is vented to atmosphere following passage through said filter assembly.

2. (Original) The mask assembly of claim 1, further comprising a connection joint defining a passage between the patient interface and the vent assembly.

3. (Original) The mask assembly of claim 2, wherein the connection joint comprises a T-shaped joint in which case the T-shaped joint is provided in use between the filter assembly and the source of pressurized gas.

4. (Original) The mask assembly of claim 2, wherein the connection joint is an L-shaped joint in which the filter assembly is positioned in use between the source of pressurized gas and the L-shaped joint.

5. (Currently Amended) The mask assembly according to ~~any one of claims~~claim 1[[4]], wherein the filter assembly includes an inlet to receive the gas exhausted by the patient, a central chamber, a filter provided in the central chamber, and an outlet configured to release the exhausted gas following filtering.

6. (Original) The mask assembly of claim 5, wherein the filter is made of a hydrophobic material.

7. (Currently Amended) The mask assembly according to ~~any one of claims~~claim 5-6, wherein the central chamber is provided with a calibration cap including one or more openings.

8. (Original) The mask assembly of claim 7, wherein the calibration cap includes a vent port in communication with the central chamber and a plug for said outlet.

9. (Currently Amended) The mask assembly according to ~~any one of claims~~claim 1-8, wherein the filter assembly includes an in-line vent positioned in use between the source of pressurized gas and the patient interface.

10. (Currently Amended) The mask assembly according to ~~any one of claims~~claim 1[[4]]-or-9, wherein the filter assembly includes a filter.

11. (Currently Amended) The mask assembly according to ~~any one of~~  
~~claims~~claim 5-8 or 10, wherein the filter has a viral efficiency of greater than 99.999%.

12. (Currently Amended) The mask assembly according to ~~any one of~~  
~~claims~~claim 5-8, 10 or 11, wherein the filter has an impedance of not greater than about  
2.0 cm water at about 60 liters per minute.

13. (Original) The mask assembly of claim 1, wherein the filter assembly is  
positioned in use between the source of pressurized gas and the patient interface.

14. (Currently Amended) The mask assembly according to ~~any one of~~  
~~claims~~claim 1-13, further comprising an anti-asphyxia valve.

15. (Original) The mask assembly of claim 14, further comprising a filter cap  
provided to the filter assembly, wherein the anti-asphyxia valve is provided to the filter  
cap.

16. (Currently Amended) The mask assembly according to ~~any one of~~  
~~claims~~claim 14-15, further comprising a vent, wherein the anti-asphyxia valve is  
provided to the vent.